

6 JAN 1973

# Washington Bureau

Approved For Release 2004/10/28 : CIA-RDP88-01314R000100270020-4

By Luther Huston

## CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR

On July 28, 1908, Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy, founder of the Christian Science Church, ordered the church's board of directors, "to start a daily newspaper called *Christian Science Monitor*." This, she said, "must be done without fail."

It was done "without fail" and in less than six months the first issue of the Monitor appeared. One of the first things the management did after the successful launching was to establish a Washington Bureau. That was early in 1909 and the Monitor has had a bureau in the capital ever since.

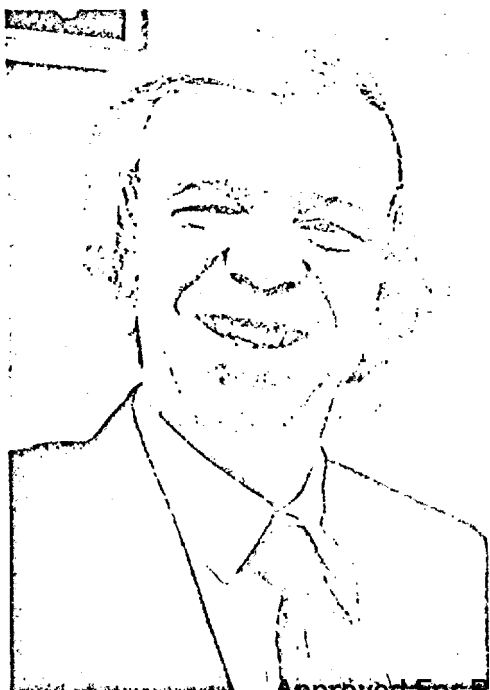
The first bureau manager was W. W. Jermaine, who also wrote for other papers, and he headed the operation from 1909 to 1915. The present chief of bureau is Courtney R. Sheldon, who served the Monitor in Boston nine years before coming to Washington three years ago.

In between Jermaine and Sheldon several famous journalists have headed the bureau. Among them are Erwin D. Canham, now the Monitor's editor in chief, and Robert S. Allen who, with the late Drew Pearson, wrote the controversial Washington Merry Go Round and is now a syndicated columnist.

### 'A slip of a girl'

Allen succeeded the only woman who has headed the bureau and probably the first and only woman to be chief of a major Washington newspaper office. She was Cora Rigby, described in Canham's book, *"Commitment to Freedom, The Story of The Christian Science Monitor"* as "a slip of a girl" and "one of the great pioneers in women's journalism."

Miss Rigby, Canham said, "paved the way for a great army of her sisters." She died in 1930. Other women have served on



COURTNEY R. SHELDON is chief of the Washington bureau of the Christian Science Monitor.

the staff of the bureau, including Mary Hornaday, who covered the multifarious activities of Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt, and later was Monitor correspondent at the United Nations.

Although it works, as do other bureaus of the Monitor in the United States, under the tolerant direction of an American news editor in the Boston headquarters, the Washington bureau is semi-autonomous. The writers are all trained journalists who know what the paper expects of them and do not need to be told what to do each day.

Nonetheless, the group meets each morning in conference to decide who is writing about what and then go about doing it. Then the writers write their stories and they file them on wires to the home office without benefit or bother of desk man in the bureau. Whatever editing of their copy is required is done in Boston.

### News in perspective

The emphasis is on coverage of national news and issues. The intent is to put the news in perspective, rather than to flash bulletins on spot news as it breaks. Unless the spot news is of unusual importance, it is left to other sources available to editors in the home office.

The Monitor newsmen do not go in for so-called investigative reporting. When the story of the bugging of Democratic National Committee headquarters at the Watergate broke, the Monitor did not give it intensive spot news coverage. The bureau did, however, run a series wrapping up the news and various angles of a potentially explosive political story, many phases of which await clarification.

Although Sheldon is the chief of the bureau he doesn't issue orders the way some Washington bureau chiefs and almost all managing editors do. Rather, he offers suggestions and coordinates bureau coverage. Besides, he is one of the bureau's top writers and covers the White House, regularly attends news conferences and briefings and frequently travels with the President.

Last year, Sheldon was chairman of the Associated Press Managing Editors Washington committee which reported, and often was critical of President Nixon's relations with the press.

### Political writer

Coverage of politics is a must for all Washington news bureaus. At the Monitor, Godfrey Sperling Jr is the national political correspondent but not the only one who writes about politics. Richard L. Strout also is a political columnist but he writes about many other things as well, including the Supreme Court.

Strout is the oldest and the most versatile member of the bureau staff. He has served in the Washington bureau for more than 50 years. As he is referred to earlier, that "Dick Strout is a correspondent of truly extraordinary talent. There have been few craftsmen work-



RICHARD L. STROUT has been a member of the Christian Science Monitor staff for 50 years. (E&P photos by Pat Young).

ing on any American newspaper to compare with him. From the Senate press gallery to presidential conventions, from a first passenger flight across the United States to the D-Day invasion, he has covered the greatest news events of half a century." That is high, but deserved praise from a boss to a great reporter.

The basic assignments of other writers on the bureau staff are Harry Ellis, financial; Robert Hey, Congress; Lucia Mouat, consumer and education news and coverage of programs for the aged; Charlotte Saikowski, State Department; Dana Adams Schmidt, a recent recruit from the *New York Times*, the Pentagon and defense, and Robert Cahn, environment editor. Cahn is the only member of the staff who has won a Pulitzer prize. The award was for a series of articles on national parks.

The Monitor likes to assign managing editors to its Washington bureau. The last three bureau chiefs, Saville Davis and William Stringer, and now Sheldon have been M.E.s in the Boston headquarters. Davis and Stringer are retired.

### In its own building

When Strout joined the Monitor in 1921, the bureau occupied a "cubby hole" in the Colorado building. When the National Press Building was ready for occupancy, circa 1924 the Monitor was the first newspaper to move in and it remained a tenant of the Press Building until early this year when it moved to an imposing new building erected and owned by the Mother Church.

Although the building houses other activities of the Church, including an advertising office of the Monitor, and leases space to other tenants, the legend over the entrance in large letters reads "The Christian Science Monitor." Thus the Washington bureau of the newspaper Mrs. Eddy ordered established 64 years ago has its own news office in the national capital housed as it were, in its own building. The address is The Monitor Building, 910 Sixteenth Street, N.W.

Approved For Release 2004/10/28 : CIA-RDP88-01314R000100270020-4